

ODE, BY WAY OF A GENERAL COMPLAINT

At Silver Falls State Park, in the cold stone lodge,
I bought a chili-dog, no onions, from a girl
I thought looked like Lolita.

Hot rods rumbled beyond the trees. We
took the nature trail, down the wet walk
beneath the falls, cautious of delicate ferns --
To witness the back side of water.

At The Enchanted Forest my child
fears the cement elves and refuses to enter
the White Rabbit's burrow. I can hardly
blame her. I manage to drop five dollars.

At the refreshment bar, we order icecream
sundaes and cherry snowcones from dismal,
shabby girls, barely in their teens.

A wet and stupid summer. August was a
pisser; November dry. I dress for cold mornings
and walk out to sunshine, madder than hell.

And now, inexplicable poverty. No apparent
source, bills I can't manage. We hock books,
antiques, old rock and roll records. Nothing
in the house escapes my dollar sign stare.

On a money run up to Portland,
car trunk full of nostalgic booty, flu strikes.
Indifferent to a lingering constipation,
a paradox: diarrhea that won't.
Prune juice rescue, nature's Drano.

Tonight misty moon through a fogged kitchen
window. Looking over all my books, deciding
what to read next before it vanishes.

CRIME IN THE KITCHEN

With no future
worth living
in laundromats
no love and kisses
on the grocery shelves
how am I to carry on

with the bedclothes weeping
the telephone
filing for divorce?

If the sofa
takes out another loan
the cats
get the stove
and the trash
can goes off on a
vacation in the tropics
how do I make the rent
with mayonnaise
in the morning?

You can't build equity
in wheat bread
you just can't.

Without true love
the lawnmower sputters
without gasoline
the toaster gets depressed.

How am I to carry on
with the ashtrays
in convulsions
the endtables
having a nervous breakdown?

There's no tomorrow
in the clothes dryer
no October
in dead Wednesday.

BEAUTY PACKS HER BAGS

Beauty packs her bags and
moves out. She's fed to the teeth with
all this pretentious bullshit, the elaborate
posturing. And she doesn't give a goddamn
for your amateur standing.

Another willful female hits the trail.

What's left? ruffled bedclothes
(her scent on the pillowcase), dappled
curtains that swell with the hot evening breeze,